

July 2007



**CRWRC**

*Living Justice, Loving Mercy*

Dear Friends,

Those of us who work in community development do so because we believe that our world isn't like it should be. God calls us to work for change and transformation in families and communities. We get excited when this really happens. The following narrative is a result of a recent field visit:

"Two communities. Two Christian Reformed pastors and their congregations. And a *whole* lot of cynicism and opposition! That's how it was six months ago in Chene and Batey Central. Both churches were convinced that the best thing for them would be a loan program. Diaconía Reformada, a program of the Dominican CRC and a CRWRC partner, knew better. It knew that you don't start working in a community by making microcredit loans. The risk is too high since you don't know who is trustworthy and who isn't.

Community level investigations were done to discover what the needs were. Loans to do business came in first in each community. But a lack of latrines also showed up on one of the lists. Diaconía Reformada decided to test the waters doing a latrine building program. At that point one pastor commented, "Why build latrines if folks don't eat well enough to deposit anything in them?" So...support was not red-hot, to say the least!



What happened to change this? In one church the pastor came on board; in the other a few members caught the vision. Even so, a whole lot of work fell on these few. No one knew at that point, but the program was hanging from a thread! Only when both churches started to hear positive comments about what the church was doing, did things began to change. Church members saw how helping out in the community opened doors for people to talk naturally. People who never had been in church before started visiting. One pastor said that he had lived in the community for 20 years and hadn't ever really known his community. Due to popular demand, a second round of latrines was requested. This time lots of church and community members helped. Everyone is happy with the results.

Pastors and church council members began to catch the vision of what the church could do and be in the community. Diaconía staff now hopes to build on this momentum. That is how community transformation gets started!"

Our global family is doing well. Son James recently got engaged to Sarah Page, a relationship begun at Calvin College. The wedding date has yet to be set.

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